

Echoes of Destiny

Andrew Walyaula

Andrew Walyaula

Copyright © Andrew Walyaula, 2023

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transcribed in any form or by means of electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the owner's copyrights.

ISBN-13: 979-8870-87-168-4

Printed by Elong'o Publishers

Email: info@elongopublishers.co.ke

Phone: +254742433826

Website: <https://elongopublishers.co.ke>

ANDREW WALYAULA

PHONE: +252790526596

E-MAIL: waliaulaandrew0@gmail.com

Dedication

To my beloved mother, Margaret Ashono,

Your unwavering support, encouragement, and presence throughout the journey of writing this book have been the guiding light that kept me motivated. Your belief in my abilities and your endless words of encouragement have fueled my passion for storytelling. This book is a tribute to your love, strength, and the bond we share. Thank you for being my rock and my inspiration. This work is dedicated to you with all my heart.

With love and gratitude,

Andrew Walyaula.

Foreword

I often marvel at how the pathways of our lives as individuals with a shared cognitive commitment and unwavering focus on career can interact to cause tremendous paradigm shift in our world view. And so, when my son Andrew Walyula (his father is my cousin so in our Bukusu culture he is supposed to refer to me as his father) called me that Sunday afternoon, requesting that I write these Forward for his book Echoes of Destiny, it struck my mind and left me a happy father indeed! Happy because Walyula had not just fulfilled his long-cherished desire as an author but more importantly, he was enhancing the journalism career as one of the pioneer writers in our village, Lwandanyi. When Walyula decided to pursue journalism as a career after successfully completing high school, there was a lot of resistance and discouragement, particularly from relatives and neighbors who wanted him to join the already-saturated teaching bandwagon that was synonymous with our area. Growing up on the slopes of Mt. Elgon, teaching and joining disciplined forces were popular careers where employment was guaranteed after training and so, it was a tall order persuading people to accept *khusomela khuandika kamakaseti* (training for newspaper writing) as an occupation worth their son pursuing for a living. But I am now proud that I successfully went against the grain to strongly encourage and inspire Walyula to join me in the journalism sojourner, that has eventually evolved in his ability and prowess to document the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Bukusu people who mainly reside in western Kenya.

The Bukusu people are one of the most prominent and populous sub-tribes that constitute the large Luhya community of western Kenya. The Bukusu, known for their circumcision rituals and agricultural practices, primarily inhabit Bungoma and Trans Nzoia counties. Therefore, this book espouses a journey through the lives of Felix and Isabela, two individuals whose paths are woven together by fate, tradition, and the intricate threads of human experience, to tell the historical facts about the Bukusu people albeit in a unique narrative. Written in the lyrical rhythms

Andrew Walyaula

of Sub-Saharan prose, specifically Bukusu, this narrative not only tells a story but also brings to life the rich tapestry of Bukusu culture — both its ancient roots and the ways it has evolved and transformed with the passage of time.

Many authors have written a form of history of the Bukusu, either as part of a wider piece of work or a full discourse. The majority of this writings tend to look at the history of the Bukusu from a migrational approach. So, set against the backdrop of Bukusu traditions and rituals, familial bonds, and personal aspirations, this narrative unfolds with both familiarity and unexpected twists. The journey encapsulates the essence of growth, resilience, and the unending pursuit of dreams. We navigate the depths of love, friendship, and the complexities that arise when traditions intersect with the choices we make.

Through each chapter, we are drawn into a world where characters come alive, emotions resonate, and the human spirit shines through even in the darkest of moments. It is a tale that traverses generations, cultures, and the universal themes that connect us all. As we journey alongside Felix, Isabela, and their loved ones, we are reminded that life's tapestry is a composition of experiences, hopes, and the undeniable power of human connection.

Echoes of Destiny is a celebration of the human spirit's capacity to endure, evolve, and create a legacy that transcends time. It is an exploration of the intricate dance between destiny and choice. It is a true testimony of determination, cognitive risk-taking and a vivid paradigm shift in career choice and intellectual transformation for posterity.

As you turn the pages, may you find yourself immersed in a world that mirrors our own Andrew Walyaula, where the trials and triumphs of its characters echo the heartbeat of existence. May their journeys inspire you to reflect on your own path, the people who have shaped it, and the potential for transformation that lies within us all.

— **Wanyama wa Chebusiri is a former BBC journalist and a media trainer..**

Preface

The pages you are about to embark upon hold a story that transcends time, culture, and the boundaries of human experience.

From the village of Mwamba to the bustling streets of the city, this narrative traverses landscapes that are both familiar and unknown. It delves into the depths of Bukusu culture, a culture steeped in history, rituals, and values that have stood the test of time. As the narrative unfolds, you will witness how this ancient culture intersects with the modern world, shaping lives and influencing choices in ways that are both poignant and profound.

The characters you will encounter—Wasike, Nakhumicha, Felix, Isabela, and their families—mirror the complexities and triumphs of real life. Their stories are an exploration of love, sacrifice, dreams, and the inescapable ties that bind them to their roots. Through their experiences, you'll delve into the meaning of being human.

In these pages, you will witness the relentless spirit of individuals striving to define their destinies amid the ebb and flow of life's currents. From the innocence of childhood to the challenges of adulthood, from the intimate bonds of family to the power of forging one's own path, this narrative paints a portrait of life's myriad shades.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iii
Foreword.....	v
Preface	vii
Lonely Christmas Bells.....	1
Echoes of Requiem	Error! Bookmark not defined.
The Song of Arrival	Error! Bookmark not defined.
The Tapestry Unfolds	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Embracing the Rite of Passage	Error! Bookmark not defined.
A Journey of Brilliance.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Navigating New Beginnings.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Bearing the Weight of Expectation.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Navigating Challenges and Choices	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Journeys Converged and Relationships Forged..	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Bonds Tested and Unveiled Truths.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Epilogue.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Glossary	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Chapter One

Lonely Christmas Bells

The morning sun cast its warm golden rays across the Sub-Saharan landscape, announcing the dawning of a new day. The air was filled with a sense of anticipation as Mwamba village stirred to life. It was a few days before Christmas, a time of celebration and togetherness for most, but in the home of Eliud Wasike, a village elder a different story unfolded.

Nestled like a well-guarded secret amidst the emerald slopes of a majestic mountain, Mwamba village exudes an aura of enchantment. This idyllic location stands as a natural boundary between two neighboring nations, offering Mwamba a unique synthesis of tranquility and vibrant existence. Here, the symphony of nature and the cadence of human lives merge harmoniously.

At the heart of Mwamba lies the enduring embrace of the mountain itself, a guardian figure casting protective shadows and offering refuge from the elements. Its towering peaks reach skyward with an air of timeless strength, a steadfast sentinel mirroring the resilience of the village it watches over. With each dawn, the sun's golden touch graces Mwamba, casting its radiant hues upon the sky and awakening the world with its warm embrace.

The river, a lifeline that weaves through the village, becomes an unwavering companion. Its sinuous course carves a gentle path, mirroring the diverse journeys of those who call Mwamba home. The river's waters become a source of sustenance, quenching both the land's thirst and the aspirations of its people. By its tranquil banks, Wasike and his family congregate not only to wash their clothes but also to weave the threads of stories that transcend generations. The river's flow sustains more than life; it nurtures the bonds that unite the villagers and their land.

Andrew Walyaula

Past the village's edge lies a serene lake, the ultimate destination of the river's meandering journey. The calm waters of the lake mirror the vast expanse of the sky, offering a space where reflections blur the line between reality and dreams. This tranquil oasis provides solace to villagers, a sanctuary from the demands of daily existence.

Mwamba's fertile soil yields the rich bounty of sorghum and millet, painting the landscape with vibrant shades of green and gold. Tended by hands that bear the wisdom of generations, the fields exemplify the harmony between humanity and the earth. Under the watchful gaze of the sun, Wasike's, Clare Nakhumicha wife tends to the land, sowing the seeds of sustenance and reaping the rewards of labor as each season unfolds.

Cows, sheep, and goats graze upon the lush grasslands, their presence a vital thread in the fabric of Mwamba's existence. These animals offer companionship and livelihood, fostering the deep connection between humanity and the natural world.

Emerald thickets punctuate the landscape, serving as shelter for wildlife and grazing grounds for animals. Within these verdant enclaves, villagers find respite, their vibrant colors and textures a stark contrast to the expansive fields and riverbanks. It's amidst these thickets that Wasike and his sons lead their livestock to graze, immersed in nature's embrace.

As the sun yields to the horizon, painting the sky with hues of pink and purple, Mwamba readies itself for rest. The nocturnal symphony of crickets and frogs serenades the night, a melodious reminder of life's unceasing cycle. The silhouette of the mountain stands tall, a sentinel attesting to the tenacity of both nature and the people who proudly call this land their own. The darkness disappeared and it was dawn again.

The compound of Wasike's homestead was a flurry of activity. Three separate huts stood side by side, each sheltering one of his wives. The women moved with purpose, their hands adorned with vibrant beads, as they worked tirelessly to decorate their homes for the impending festivities. Bunches of colorful wildflowers were woven into intricate

patterns and hung on walls made of clay and wood. Intricately designed baskets, a symbol of the Bukusu culture, were suspended from the ceiling, adding a touch of rustic elegance to the interiors.

Amidst the bustling activity, Nakhumicha, the newest and youngest wife of Wasike, stood in the doorway of her hut. Her round belly bore evidence of the new life growing within her, a promise of generations yet to come. Fatigue lined her face as she watched the other wives meticulously beautify their homes.

The pregnancy ushered in a subtle but distinct transformation in Nakhumicha's daily routine. There was an almost instinctual shift in her movements, a rhythm that seemed to resonate with the very essence of life blossoming within her. She found herself drawn to a familiar space, the sanctuary of the toilet, as if an unspoken connection had been forged between her and this corner of the house.

Her footsteps were deliberate yet gentle, each one guided by a newfound sense of purpose. It was as though the pregnancy had painted her world with a different palette, and she navigated her surroundings with an aura of quiet reverence. She would retreat to the toilet, a place where she spent a considerable amount of time. The subtle changes in her body seemed to lead her there, a quiet call that she could not ignore.

Emerging from the restroom after what felt like an eternity, she carried her husband's shirt in her hands. The fabric, worn yet familiar, held a certain comfort for her, a symbol of their shared journey. With a delicate grace, she draped it over her shoulders, allowing the cloth to envelop her like a protective embrace. The shirt seemed to carry with it the essence of her husband's presence, a subtle reminder that they were united in this experience.

As she moved around the house, an unexpected melody escaped her lips. Her voice, soft and melodic, mingled with the air to serenade the unseen life growing within her. Her song, a blend of soothing lullaby and unspoken love, resonated through the corridors. Her words were a tender

Andrew Walyaula

whisper meant solely for her unborn child, a promise of care and devotion that transcended words.

In her hands, she held a broom, its bristles barely brushing the floor as she moved. The act of sweeping took on a gentle cadence, a chore that now seemed to symbolize a deeper connection to the world around her. With each stroke, she moved not only dust and dirt but also an energy that reflected the transformation happening within her. The broom became an extension of her maternal instinct, sweeping away not just physical debris but also worries and uncertainties.

Nakhumicha's movements held a certain grace, an elegance that seemed to emanate from the very core of her being. Her actions, simple as they were, spoke volumes about the depth of her emotions. It was a dance of motherhood, a choreography of love and preparation that unfolded as naturally as the seasons. As she sang and moved, her aura radiated a sense of anticipation, a quiet excitement for the journey ahead.

However, Nakhumicha's heart was heavy. She wondered how she could celebrate the birth of Jesus when her own place within the family seemed so uncertain. It was widely believed that the last wife was often the most cherished, but for Nakhumicha, the reality was far from that idyllic notion. Wasike's affections were divided among his wives, but Nakhumicha's hut stood mostly empty, a stark contrast to the bustling activity in the others.

The sun climbed higher in the sky, pregnant women, like Nakhumicha, were held in high esteem. They were revered for carrying the seeds of the future, and thus, their well-being was of utmost importance. With a sense of determination, Nakhumicha picked a pot and set off to fetch water, her steps steady and resolute. The pot balanced gracefully on her head; a skill honed from years of tradition.

Slowly, she made her way back to her hut. Once inside, she set the pot down and surveyed her surroundings. The walls were bare, and a simple clay floor stretched out before her. With her fingers, she scooped up the

cool earth and began to paint. The clay soil transformed into hues of red and ochre, as her artistic touch brought life to the walls.

Using a banana as her brush, Nakhumicha delicately painted the words "Merry Christmas" on the wall. The words held a silent prayer for happiness and unity, a wish that seemed distant in her current circumstances. Her gaze lingered on the words, her thoughts drifting to her two children who were away visiting their grandparents. While they were learning about their heritage and culture, Nakhumicha was left alone, yearning for their laughter to fill her hut.

With Christmas Eve settling in, the village hummed with excitement. The air was alive with melodies sung by children, their voices carrying the promise of joy and togetherness. The aroma of fresh food wafted through the air as families prepared for the festive feast. It was a celebration of the birth of Christ, a time to come together and share in the blessings of life.

Yet, for Nakhumicha, the day felt bittersweet. Her husband's instructions to avoid visiting her own mother left her feeling isolated, a sense of loneliness deepening within her. As the evening sun painted the horizon with shades of orange and pink, the compound was full of activities. The first wife, Christine reveled in her privileges, while Nakhumicha's hut remained untouched, her efforts seemingly unnoticed.

The clock neared midnight, a knock echoed through the night, startling Nakhumicha. Her heart raced as she opened the door, her eyes widening in surprise. Wasike stood before her, a glimmer of warmth in his eyes. It was a rarity for him to visit her at this hour, and Nakhumicha's heart danced with uncertainty.

However, joy quickly turned to sorrow as word spread through the compound. The first wife's child, Wafula, had tragically passed away, leaving the family in a somber state. The festive atmosphere was replaced by mourning, and the shadow of grief enveloped them all.

Andrew Walyaula

The heart-wrenching cries of grief echoed through the air, mingling with the heaviness of sorrow that hung over Christine. Her anguish was palpable, a raw emotion that flowed freely as she grappled with the unfathomable loss of her beloved son. The weight of her pain seemed almost too much to bear, as the universe itself shared in her mourning.

Amidst the sea of sorrow, Nakhumicha stood as a pillar of support, her presence a comforting balm to the wounded heart of Christine. Their bond was unspoken but profound, a connection forged through shared experiences and the understanding that only a mother can truly comprehend the depths of another mother's pain.

Eliud, his eyes rimmed with tears, leaned heavily on Nakhumicha's shoulder. He was a broken man, shattered by the loss of his son, a loss that had left a void too vast to comprehend. His voice trembled as he began to recount the haunting details of his son's final moments, a narrative that would forever be etched in his memory.

"My son died while I was watching," Eliud's voice quivered, a fragile thread holding back a torrent of emotions. His words were heavy, weighted with a burden of anguish that seemed almost insurmountable. "I couldn't stand it," he continued, his voice a mixture of pain and disbelief.

Christine's tear-stained face turned toward Eliud as he spoke, her eyes reflecting the torment that raged within her. Each word he uttered was a dagger to her heart, a reminder of the stark reality that her son was gone, taken from her in the cruelest of ways.

Eliud's voice trembled as he continued, his voice a poignant reflection of a father's helplessness in the face of tragedy. "Christine was preparing supper when we suddenly heard a sharp cry, 'help!' from his brothers." His voice cracked, the memory of that cry cutting through him like a knife. It was a cry that had shattered the tranquility of their home, signaling the arrival of a nightmare they could not escape.

"I ran there first," Eliud's voice wavered, "and I was told he had been choked by food." His words hung in the air, a grim testament to the

fragility of life and the randomness of fate. It was a simple act, a momentary lapse that had irrevocably altered the course of their lives.

Desperation and urgency had driven them to action, their hearts racing as they tried to save their precious child. "We tried first aid," Eliud's voice held a note of defeat, a realization that their efforts had been in vain. Their hands had moved with purpose, guided by a parent's instinct, but destiny had other plans.

His voice grew heavy with grief as he continued his narrative, recounting the arrival of neighbors who had rushed to their aid, offering suggestions and guidance in a desperate attempt to salvage what was slipping through their fingers. Each passing second had felt like an eternity, their efforts a futile battle against time itself.

"As his eyes started to change," Eliud's voice quivered, "a neighbor took him out of her hands." His words hung in the air, The truth had become painfully evident – their beloved son was slipping away, and there was nothing they could do to stop it.

Nakhumicha stood by Eliud's side, her presence a quiet source of strength amidst the storm of emotions. She listened to his words with a heavy heart, her own eyes glistening with unshed tears. As he recounted the painful details of their son's passing, she felt the weight of his grief and carried it alongside her own.

In the midst of their sorrow, Nakhumicha's touch was a gesture of compassion, a gentle reminder that they were not alone in their pain. She wiped away her own tears as well as Eliud's, offering comfort through her unwavering presence.

Eliud's shoulders sagged with the weight of his grief, his voice trailing off as he struggled to find words that could encapsulate the depth of his loss. The memory of that tragic day would forever be etched in his mind, a painful reminder of a life cut short.

Andrew Walyaula

Nakhumicha, her heart heavy with empathy, reached out to him, her touch a silent reassurance that they would navigate this sorrow together. "Be strong," she whispered, her voice a tender echo of the strength that resided within them, a strength that would carry them through even the darkest of days.

Christmas morning dawned, but the celebrations were subdued. The news of Wafula's passing had reached other family members, and the air was heavy with sadness. The joyful songs of the children had given way to the hushed murmurs of condolences.

The sun cast its golden glow over the village, Nakhumicha stood by her hut, her heart heavy with the weight of solitude. The celebration of Christ's birth was a distant echo in her world, as she grappled with her own sense of place within the intricate tapestry of life.

The day stretched on, and the sun's rays began to soften. In the midst of the mournful atmosphere, a soft melody rose from the distance. The village children, young and hopeful, had gathered to sing a Christmas song, their voices carrying a message of unity and love. Nakhumicha listened, her heart stirring with emotion as the sweet notes floated through the air.

"Siku kuu, Yolile,

Siku kuu, Yolile,

Siku kuu, Yolile."

They sang, the words signaling the arrival of Christmas. The song resonated with the village, a reminder that even in times of sorrow, there was room for joy and togetherness. As the children's voices blended harmoniously, Nakhumicha's gaze turned upward, her eyes fixed on the vast African sky.

In the midst of the somber atmosphere that enveloped Christine's compound, a bonfire blazed to life, its flickering flames casting a warm and eerie glow upon the surroundings. This was to be the ritual for the

next three days – a communal act of mourning that brought the community together in shared grief.

Dusk settled over the village, people began to gather around the bonfire, their faces etched with expressions of sadness and empathy. The crackling of the fire provided a haunting soundtrack to the scene, its erratic dance mirroring the emotions that surged within the hearts of those who had gathered.

The bonfire, a symbol of both life and transformation, held a sacred place in this ritual of remembrance. The flames themselves carried the weight of the collective sorrow, serving as a conduit for the unspoken words that flowed through the hearts of the mourners.

In the midst of the gathering, the grandmother, Pricilla stood vigil over the body of the child, her eyes fixed upon the small form that lay in her hut. Her presence was a solemn one, a silent acknowledgement of the passing of a young life that had been so full of promise. It was her duty to watch over the departed, to ensure that the journey from this world to the next was undertaken with the utmost care and respect.

Christine, her eyes swollen from tears that seemed endless, moved through the gathering with a heavy heart. Her grief was palpable, a tangible force that seemed to engulf her. Every step she took was laden with the weight of the irreparable loss she had suffered, a loss that no words could adequately convey.

The night settled in, the mourners encircled the bonfire, their faces illuminated by the flickering flames. The crackling fire seemed to cast shadows on their grief-stricken faces, a visual representation of the darkness that had descended upon their lives. The air was heavy with a shared sense of loss, an unspoken connection that bound them together in their pain.

Stories were exchanged in hushed tones, memories of the child who had been taken too soon. Laughter was rare, replaced by the quiet camaraderie of shared sorrow. Each person had their own memories to

Andrew Walyaula

contribute, their own moments of joy that now existed alongside the ache of absence.

The bonfire continued to burn; the night stretched on. Time seemed to lose its meaning in the midst of grief, the minutes and hours blurring into an endless stream of moments suspended in sorrow. The grandmother's vigil remained unbroken, her presence a steadfast reassurance that the child was not alone, even in death.

For three nights, this ritual of mourning would persist, the bonfire burning as a beacon of remembrance. The flames seemed to dance with a mournful grace, their movement mirroring the ebb and flow of human emotion. And as the village came together in the midst of this shared pain, the bonds that united them became even stronger.

The day passed, and evening descended once again. The compound was shrouded in a solemn hush, the usual sounds of laughter and celebration replaced by quiet contemplation. And then, as the clock ticked closer to midnight, another knock sounded at Nakhumicha's door. The gentle rap of knuckles against wood held a promise, a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness.

With a cautious heart, Nakhumicha opened the door to reveal Wasike, his eyes carrying a softness she hadn't seen before. There was a tenderness in his gaze as he looked upon her, and in that moment, Nakhumicha felt a connection that transcended words. Guided by an unspoken understanding, Wasike reached out and took her hand, a silent invitation to join him.

Leaving the confines of her hut, Nakhumicha stepped into the night, her heart beating in rhythm with the world around her. The air was cool against her skin, and the stars above shone with a brilliance that seemed to mirror the spark within her soul. Wasike led her to a clearing, where the moon's soft glow bathed the earth in silver light.

And then, summoned by the magic of the moment, the village children appeared once more. Their voices rose in unison, carrying the same song that had filled the air earlier in the day. "*Siku kuu, Yolile*," they sang, their

voices weaving a tapestry of sound that enveloped Nakhumicha and Wasike.

In the presence of the man she had married, the man who had chosen her to be a part of his life, Nakhumicha felt a sense of belonging that surpassed the confines of tradition. The weight of loneliness began to lift, replaced by the warmth of connection.

As the song reached its crescendo, a sense of unity settled over the compound. The somber mood that had clouded their hearts slowly gave way to a glimmer of hope, a promise of brighter days ahead. In the midst of loss, the village had come together to find solace in each other's company, to share in the bond that made them a community.

The final notes of the song hung in the air, Nakhumicha looked up at the sky, her heart filled with a newfound understanding. And though her journey was far from easy, she knew that the threads of love and resilience woven into her story were as vibrant and enduring as the Bukusu culture itself.

It was dawn, Nakhumicha stood alongside Wasike, their hands entwined. In that moment, as the world awakened to a new day, she felt a sense of peace that transcended the challenges she had faced. The sun rose, casting its gentle light over the landscape, and Nakhumicha knew that with each dawn, there was a chance for renewal, for growth, and for the celebration of life's most precious moments.

**Continue reading by
purchasing the ebook**